

v. 25:4

# 100



#### THE ORACLE

This morning, after washing  
my ex-wife's laundry, part of  
that mountain of clothing  
she's accumulated since Winter,  
I notice my Euphorbia now has three stems,  
each with a cluster of red  
blossoms which smell like aged port.  
At that point, I determine  
to finish writing the final  
examinations for my students, complete  
chapter eighteen in Churros y Chocolate.

But I wander, spying  
Robert Duncan's The Years As Catches  
on my bookshelf, walk over and open it,  
surprised to find as a bookmark, a poem  
I wrote in June '77 on the back  
of a commentary for the showing of Oshima's  
"The Man Who Left His Will On Film."  
The poem is melodramatic, but then,  
it was the year for melodrama.  
The only good part of the poem is at the end,  
when the heart as speaker cautions the poet,  
"For every tanager you send into the air,  
send also a hawk."

Reading this, I am reminded  
of what it is that I like most about poetry,  
that sudden appearance of the oracle.